CHRISTIAN MISSIONS ENTITLED TO SUPPORT.

A

DISCOURSE,

PREACHED BEFORE THE WELSH-NECK BAPTIST ASSOCIATION AT THEIR SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY, HELD WITH THE MISPEH CHURCH, DARLINGTON DIST. S C.

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BY

J. C. FURMAN.

PASTOR OF THE WELSH-NECK CHURCH.

'None of us liveth to himself.'

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SERMON.

Titus 2: 14. Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.

In this interesting passage the apostle presents several important subjects of consideration. Having previously described his christian brethren, and himself, as expecting the second coming of the Lord Jesus with a sort of holy anxiety,—'looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ'—he here alludes to the method by which, and the ends for which, the Saviour had secured for himself a people upon earth.—That method consisted in the highest personal sacrifice—'who gave himself for us'—and the ends to be answered by it, were the deliverance of his people from the power, and the punishment of sin, and a moral preparation of them for his service, investing them with a character, by which they might be clearly distinguished from the rest of the world, and rendered efficient instruments for accomplishing the most important objects. All this is certainly meant to be expressed by the terms—'purify unto himself—a peculiar people—zealous of good works.

To this last clause, as containing an inspired, and therefore, unerring description of christian character, I invite your attention, with special reference to what is the appropriate subject of our present consideration, viz. missionary operations.

It is a notorious fact, that ministers, and churches, calling themselves ministers of Christ, and churches of Christ, have avowed a determined hostility to all missionary undertakings, and have even assumed the epithet—'Anti-missionary' as their distinguishing title. It is equally well known that churches and individuals, who have not

placed themselves in the ranks of organized opposition, are yet *doing nothing* in aid of this important cause; and that many who profess to approve and support, are doing *so little* in its behalf that their contributions serve only to attest their knowledge of its claims, and their unwillingness to meet them fairly. '*These* know their duty, but they do it not.' In the judgment of those professed christians, the stern self-denial, the living martyrdom of the missionary himself, and the pecuniary contributions from the hands of others intended to supply his bodily necessities, together with their fervent prayers for his spiritual prosperity, and the success of his labors,are either no part of the 'good works,' enjoined by the authority of Christ; or they constitute so small an item, that they may be omitted without the forfeiture of a confidence in their own piety.

I shall endeavor to rebut the arguments of opposers; to condemn the apathy and indifference of those who are doing nothing; and to justify and excite the zeal of those who acknowledge their duty in this important particular. In doing this I shall refer to the word of God, under a solemn conviction, that by it we shall be judged in the last day; and that by it every sentiment we entertain, and every practice we pursue, may be tested, so that we may now determine at what we shall rejoice, and at what we may be ashamed, at that awfully momentous period. In prosecuting this purpose let us

I. Consider the conduct of primitive christians as affording christian missions the sanction of their example:

II. Refer to descriptions of christian character and duty, drawn by the pen of inspiration, as evidence that christians ought to aid in missionary undertakings:

III. Inquire into the justness of applying the epithet '*good works*' to christian missions, in view of the mode of their operations: and

IV. Show that this distinction is pre-eminently due to them.

I. In the first place, we are to consider the example of the first christians, as furnishing authority for missions.

No one will deny that in the conduct of inspired men, and of the churches gathered by their labors, and trained by their instruction, we have a true explanation of the character of those good works, spoken of in the text; and which all, who had believed in God, were urged to be careful to maintain.

The periods of time which immediately preceded, and followed the ascension of Christ constituted a glorious epoch in the history of the world. Until then the institutions of religion were confined to a sin-

gle nation. To the Jews pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises. Looking back through the long vista of centuries, upon the repeated displays of God's gracious purpose toward them, the Israelites—some with foolish pride, but some with grateful joy—could say, 'he hath not dealt so with any nation.' Even when Messiah made his advent, the Jews were exclusively honored with his appearance among them. It is in this sense the evangelist remarks, 'he came to his own, and his own received him not.' In reference to those benefits, which he dispensed as he 'went about doing good,' he clearly intimated on one memorable occasion, that in answering petitions made by persons, not members of the Jewish community, although he did not *violate*, he was yet *exceeding* the design of his ministry. Respecting the plea of the Syrophenician woman he remarked, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of *the house of Israel*.' When he had clothed the seventy disciples with the power of working miracles, and had commissioned them to proclaim the fact, that the kingdom of God was come nigh, he limited their ministry to the country of the Jews: 'go not,' said he, 'into the way of the gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.' He predicted, indeed, that he would attract to himself *men of every nation*, but he predicted it as an event which would *follow* his crucifixion; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.'

When this momentous occurrence had transpired, and the crucified Redeemer had risen from the dead, a different order of things was established. The middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, was broken down; and the Saviour, having satisfied the disciples of his resurrection, by many infallible proofs, imparted instruction as to their future course, substituting a new and different commission, in the place of the one, under which they had acted. Having taught them that repentance and remission of sins, should be preached in his name among all nations, he declared, 'all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,' and added the solemn injunction 'go ye, therefore, and *teach all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' '*Go ye into all the world* and preach the gospel to *every creature*.' 'Ye shall receive power from on high, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in *Samaria* and to *the uttermost part of the earth*.'

When he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. The disciples

immediately returned to Jerusalem, and there waited, according to the direction of their master, for the promised outpourings of the spirit.—On the day of pentecost their expectations were realized; and, in the unprecedented miracle wrought on that occasion, a further manifestation was made of God's purpose respecting the nations of the earth.—The apostles were instantly endued with such a knowledge of hitherto unknown languages, as enabled them to address, in their own tongues, a multitude composed of individuals from fifteen different countries. Peter explained this surprising event, as a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, respecting the outpourings of the spirit *upon all flesh.* In his address to those who were awakened on that occasion, he declared, 'the promise is to you and to your children, and to *all that are afar off,* even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.' In accordance with these views of the will of God, we find Philip preaching the gospel in the city of Samaria; then baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch; and then preaching the gospel from Azotus to Cæsarea.

But, notwithstanding the intimations of the Divine intention, which had been already afforded, the disciples, and even the apostles, were slow in apprehending their own duty. For this reason, when an angel was sent to Cornelius directing him to learn the will of God from Peter, a vision appeared to that apostle designed to satisfy his mind respecting the propriety of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. For this reason, the believing Jews, who accompanied Peter to the house of Cornelius, were astonished at the effects which followed his preaching on that occasion, 'because that on the Gentiles, also, was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.' For the same reason, the Jewish converts at Jerusalem made Peter's conduct in this case a matter of grave accusation against him—'thou wentest in to *men uncircumcised,* and didst eat with them.' Peter, however explained the matter, by showing that he had acted under the highest authority—that he had only obeyed the plainly manifested will of God. 'When they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.'

More than half of that portion of the sacred volume, which we denominate the Acts of the Apostles, is occupied with the history of one of their number viz: the Apostle Paul. In the account of his conversion, recorded in the ninth chapter, we have this declaration of the Lord Jesus respecting him; 'he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before *the Gentiles,* and kings, and the children of Israel.' It is unnecessary to refer to the subsequent history of this apostle, to show how he fulfilled this purpose of his Lord and Saviour, by preach-

ing the gospel even among those, who were sunken in the grossest idolatry. The office which he filled, and which he delighted to magnify, was that of *missionary to the heathen.* It may not be amiss to inform those who are fighting against the cause of missions, that the words *Apostle* and *Missionary* have originally the same meaning.—They differ in nothing but in their source, the one being derived from the Greek language, and the other from the Latin. The meaning of both, expressed by a term of Saxon origin, is 'one *sent.*' 'Anti-apostolic' would, therefore, be as appropriate a designation of certain churches and associations as 'Anti-missionary.' It may not be improper to state for the benefit of the same persons, that the word *Gentile*, found in the scriptures, and the word *Heathen*, used now-a-days, agree perfectly in meaning; both terms being applied to those nations, or individuals, who are destitute of the word of God, and ignorant of the true religion. Our translators have employed the latter of these terms in a passage in which Paul has described an incident in his own life, which presents a beautiful parallel with what some of us have witnessed, when ministering brethren, who were to remain at home, have given assurances of their approbation and co-operation to others, who were on the eve of departure for foreign lands. This is his language; 'And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, saw the grace, which was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right-hand of fellowship, *that we should go unto the heathen*, and they unto the circumcision.'—Gal. 2: 9. Surely it becomes those who boast of the opposition they are making to modern missions, to pause and consider whether they are not glorying in their shame.

Passing from the example of the primitive preachers of the gospel to that of primitive private christians, we shall see, that they considered it to be their duty to make contributions of their worldly substance for the promotion of the cause; particularly, for the aid of the poor, and the maintainance of those, who were engaged in the work of the ministry. Those sacrifices of personal property, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostle, greatly surpass what has been done since; and probably will never be equalled again until ministers and Christians generally are distinguished by those degrees of faith, which made eternity an ever-present reality before the minds of the first christians; and which, weighing temporal things with eternal, caused them to feel that all earthly good or evil was insignificant in comparison with the salvation or ruin of the soul. The necessity of the case requiring it, they hesitated not a moment to give up their proprietorship in what they had acquired or inherited, and to become dependent on a com-

mon stock. After the account of the baptism of the three thousand, we are told, 'they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, as every man had need.'

The brief accounts of Paul's ministry, found in the Acts and in his epistles, contain repeated evidences of his deriving his support from his brethren. When he and Barnabas were sent, at an important crisis, from Antioch to Jerusalem, they were 'brought on their way by the church:' and when, in the character of a missionary, he was about to enter unexplored and heathen regions, he called upon the churches to supply him with the means necessary for the performance of such journeys. To the church in Rome he says, 'whensoever I take my journey into Spain I will come to you; for I trust to see you in my journey, and *to be brought on my way thitherward by you.*' In writing to the Philippians, he expresses in the liveliest manner his gratitude to God, on their account, because of their exemplary readiness to meet his necessities: 'I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again. Ye have done well that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thesalonica *ye sent once, and again, unto my necessities.* Not because I desire a gift; but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus *the things which were sent from you,* an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.'

Such is an imperfect sketch of the conduct of primitive christians—to us a plain and authoritative example; and one which should shame to silence those inconsistent men, who, while they set up an exclusive claim to a proper regard for the scriptures, condemn others as mercenary and presumptuous, merely because they are conscientiously following this example.

II. We come now to descriptions of christian character, and christian duty, found in the sacred volume, which seem to us to render co-operation in missionary undertakings obligatory upon Christians.

Let us attend, first, to those descriptions, which apply especially to the ministers of Christ. The character, and work of the adorable Saviour, and those of the men whom he invests with the ministry of

reconciliation, present points of infinite contrast: yet there are other points of obvious resemblance. '*As* my Father hath sent me, *so* send I you,' was his language to the twelve, after his resurrection. *He was sent to proclaim the messages of mercy in the ears of guilty, and miserable human beings.* The ministers of Jesus preach the very gospel which fell from his blessed lips; and inasmuch as his spiritual presence is promised to be perpetually with them, and it is through their agency that he invites the ends of the earth to look unto him and be saved, each one of them may adopt the strong language of the apostle, '*for me to live is Christ*;' i. e. it is in a sense the life and ministry of Christ perpetuated. *They meet the same reception which was afforded him;* and just in proportion as the circumstances under which they labour, and the spirit in which they labour, resemble the circumstances in which he was placed, and the spirit which actuated him, will they encounter the contradiction and opposition, by which his way was marked. In this respect the foreign missionary is most nearly like his Lord and master. Another point of resemblance, and the one which deserves our special notice, is, that so far as the wants of his human nature were concerned, *God did not raise him above the necessity of dependence upon those who loved him for his works' sake.* The thoughtless bird, and the very beast of the wood, had larger possessions than 'the apostle of our profession' claimed for himself; for whilst they could retire, the one to her own nest, and the other to his own hiding place, he had not where to lay his head. At the hands of pious females he was content to receive supplies of his wants; for it is said of one of his journeys, during which he went throughout every city, and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom, that the twelve were with him, and certain *women* which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom he cast seven devils, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, *which ministered unto him of their substance.* In accordance with his own example he selected the first publishers of his gospel almost exclusively from among the poor. Matthew, called to his office from the employment of a tax-gatherer, and Barnabas, who was a possessor of landed estate, were probably the only ones among these primitive preachers, who were not absolutely poor. And it is not improbable that Matthew, however lucrative his office might have been, reduced himself to a common lot of poverty with the rest of the disciples, when he resigned his seat at the receipt-of-custom. Barnabas, we know, 'having land sold it, and brought the money, and laid it down at the apostles' feet.' Such was

the state of things, in the early history of the church ; and, at the present day, we well know, the dispensation of the gospel is not unfrequently, I might say, almost invariably, committed to those, who though 'rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God has promised to them that love him,' are yet 'poor in this world.'

Destitute, as the early preachers of the gospel were, of worldly possessions, they evidently felt it to be their duty to abstain from any employments, which would have interfered with an entire devotedness to their ministry. Not only did they forego the opportunities of accumulation, afforded by their former secular callings ; they even declined an important religious service, because it would have consumed time, which they felt themselves bound to employ in a different manner.— Hence arose the institution of the office of deacons. The apostles having directed the brethren to look-out, and appoint suitable persons to occupy this office, declared, 'but we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.' Being thus excluded from the ordinary means of support, and having no miraculous provision for their maintenance, these first preachers of the gospel were, of course, shut up to the necessity of *depending, like their master, upon the contributions of those, who loved them for their work's sake.*

Paul's case may be cited as being at variance with this statement. He refers more than once, to his laboring with his own hands. But under what circumstances ? Undoubtedly those of extreme necessity. 'Even unto this hour we both *hunger, and thirst, and are naked,* and are buffetted, and *have no certain dwelling-place,* and labour, working with our hands.' Such are his own words, written to the Corinthian church *from Ephesus.* From this passage, and from Acts 20 : 34, 2 Cor. 11 : 9, and 1 Thes. 2 : 9 we learn that Paul did labor for his own support, at Ephesus, Corinth, and Thessalonica. But why did the apostle thus labor with his own hands ? First, because the contributions, made by other churches, were not sufficient to support him ; and secondly, because particular circumstances rendered it inexpedient for him to derive his support from certain churches. That he was supported in part is beyond a doubt : to the Corinthians he says, 'I robbed other churches taking wages of them. to do you service.' To the Philippians he writes, 'In Thessalonica ye sent once, and again unto my necessity.' These contributions were made by extremely poor churches, (the abundance of their joy and their *deep poverty* abounding to the riches of their liberality) and were not adequate to the apostle's maintenance. He was, therefore, compelled to resort to manual labor to provide himself the means of subsistence ;

because particular reasons rendered it inexpedient to exercise his right to a support from the churches for whose good he was laboring.—What these reasons were is explained in 2 Cor, 11th chapter. He kept himself from being burdensome, not because he did not love them, and was unwilling to receive their contributions; but because he would cut off occasion of misrepresentation and calumny, from those who desired occasion viz. the false apostles. His conduct, therefore, on these occasions cannot with any propriety be alleged as an objection to the position, that the primitive preachers looked to the churches for their support.

In perfect harmony with their example is the rule of ministerial duty laid down in the word of God. While Timothy was taught what he had a right to expect, (1 Tim. 5: 17, 18,) he was authoritatively enjoined, 'meditate upon these things; *give thyself wholly to them*, that thy profiting may appear unto all.'

From these views of of the condition of ministers of the gospel, we think, it is clear, that they are a class of men, who, according to the Divine will, are to abstain from those employments, by which men ordinarily acquire property,—to make the care of souls their one great business,—and to depend for their sustenance, except in extraordinary cases, upon means provided by their brethren in Christ. The evidence that it is, not only their privilege, but their duty, to preach the gospel to any of the inhabitants of the earth to whom they can have access, is furnished in the very terms of the commission, 'Go ye *into all the world*,' 'preach the gospel *to every creature*; in Paul's description of the subject matter of the ministry of reconciliation to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling *the world* unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and in the example of the first preachers already considered.

Let us now glance at what is said of Christian character and duty in general.

'Ye are the light of the world,' said the Saviour to his disciples.—There is an important sense in which the humble christian, whose great poverty may prevent his conferring benefits on others at a distance, acts out the meaning of this declaration, and by the luminous exhibition of a holy life, demonstrates the difference between right and wrong, between sin and holiness. But there is a wider sense, in which this impressive assertion is to be understood. Our Saviour meant to teach that the darkness of idolatry and error,—the gross darkness, which has covered the people of the earth,—is not to be dissipated without the instrumentality of his people. 'The light of the

world,' was a title which, in the highest sense, belonged to Him, and which he applied to himself, as the source of all intellectual and spiritual light in the universe; but in an inferior sense, he, no doubt, appropriates the same title to himself, when he says, '*as long as I am in the world*, I am the light of the world'—that is, 'while I continue on the earth, my life, and teaching, and preaching are diffusing abroad the truth, which like light removing darkness,' scatters the errors and ignorance of men. Now, in this sense, his people are the representatives of Christ; and when he says to them, 'ye are the light of the world,' it is as if he had said, 'the knowledge of revealed truth is in your keeping—the word of God will never go but whither you bear, or send it—the gospel will nowhere be preached without your countenance and aid.'

Passages already referred to under the previous head of this discourse, teach us *in what manner* private christians may perform, in part, the duty of co-operating with those who perform the labor of preaching the gospel. 'Sending to their necessities,' and praying for their success, are repeatedly insisted on as prominent parts of this duty.

In the third epistle of John, the design of the writer evidently is to commend and encourage Gaius, on account of the liberality he had exercised toward those ministers, who had gone among the heathen, without receiving any remuneration from them. 'Beloved,' says the venerable apostle, 'thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; which have borne witness to thy charity before the church; whom if thou bring forward on their journey, after a godly sort, thou shalt do well; because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth.' Here was a most amiable character—a christian, who did not suffer the spirit of covetousness, in the garb of a prudent suspicion of persons at a distance, to chill the sympathy, and to refuse the aid, which were due *to brethren abroad*, as well, as to those at home. This man's soul prospered.'

The church, to which Gaius belonged, contained a member of a very different stamp. He was probably a minister; but a man of a proud, ambitious, domineering spirit: he loved to have the pre-eminence; he withheld from the church a letter written by the apostle, and spoke maliciously against him; he would not receive the brethren, for kindness to whom Gaius was commended; and not satisfied with

this degree of opposition, he forbade others to receive them, and effected the excommunication of those members of the church, who did not comply with his prohibition. Such was Diotrephes—a character, it would seem reasonable to suppose, none would emulate; but strange to say, churches are to be found who deal 'non-fellowship' and exclusion against all missionaries, and friends of missions.*

It is needless to mention how often the exercise of practical benevolence is enjoined in general terms. The scriptures abound in such precepts as these, 'to do good, and to communicate, forget not.' 'Be not weary in well doing'—'Be ye steadfast, and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord'—'As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them which are of the household of faith.' Were there neither examples, nor direct precepts in the scriptures respecting the sending of the gospel to pagan countries, these general precepts would afford a perfect sanction for the use of any means, by which the gospel might be conveyed to them; provided there was nothing wrong in the means themselves.

III. Let us now enquire, Whether there be any ground of objection to Christian missions in *their mode* of operation?

This topic is introduced, merely, for the purpose of remarking upon the opinions of some, who object to missions because of *the constant demands for money*, which are made for their support. It is to be lamented, that many seem to feel themselves exonerated from all obligation to honor God with their substance, when they can make a charge of base motives against those, who urge the claims of benevolent undertakings. In a deplorable absence of that charity, which 'thinketh no evil,' but which 'hopeth all things,' they sit in judgment on 'another man's servant,' and *assuming the prerogative of judging the heart*, condemn him for motives which he never avows, and of the existence of which they can give no proof. Now this is wrong, greatly wrong. Reputation—whether of an individual, or a society—is a most delicate thing, and as valuable as it is delicate. Not only is it susceptible of deserved injury from direct proof of guilt, it receives unmerited damage from a mere assertion, a hint, an insinuation, a whisper.—The injustice, which is thus done, is oft times most grievous; and this is the injustice, which is habitually practised by some, who call

*Dr. Adam Clarke employs a homely but very significant epithet as descriptive of the spirit of Diotrephes: he calls it 'THE DOG-IN-THE-MANGER SPIRIT.' What is the invariable result of opposition to missions? Spiritual leanness, decline, and death. To those who are UNWILLING to give its blessings to others, the gospel CAN be no better food, than straw to a carnivorous animal.

themselves disciples of the Saviour. An application is made by some advocate of missions; the circumstances of the case are fairly stated; the tender and powerful motives, which the gospel supplies, are bro't to bear upon the party addressed, but all in vain; because he has shielded his heart with a suspicion—an uncharitable and unfounded, but not on that account less powerful suspicion of the integrity of tho friends of missions.

We would press this *consideration* upon those who profess to be opposed to missions, *out of respect to God's authority.* We would solemnly remind them, that while Divine authority has referred us to *the conduct* of men, as the basis of our opinion concerning their character, it not only *does not allow*, but *positively forbids* our judging the motives of others. If these objectors *know* of fraudulent dealing in the management of missionary funds, they are at liberty, nay they are bound, to publish these facts; but if they know of no such dealings, then, their insinuations and objections are not only unmanly, and ungenerous, but in a high degree unchristian. We beg those professors of religion, to whom these remarks apply, to examine well the position they have assumed; and to enquire whether in their zeal to put down certain measures, because they deem them to be destitute of scriptural sanction, they have not themselves been betrayed into an egregious violation of some of the plainest precepts in the scriptures.

Another class of persons are offended at these demands for money; but for a very different reason. They have no suspicion of unfaithfulness in the conduct of our missionary agencies, but they grieve that the glory of the gospel should be lessened, as they think, by the stress laid upon obtaining money. Money, in their view, exerts a kind of desecrating influence upon religion. But what is money? Is it not the representative of human labor, and of the various productions of nature—those creatures of God, which 'are good,' and 'to be received with thanksgiving'? The *love* of money indeed is a most ruinous idolatry; as is the love of the world, and of the things of the world: but the love of money, and money itself are two very different things. The one can only be a direful calamity; to feel it is like being subject to leprosy or plague—the other may be, and often is, a distinguished advantage, especially as it invests its owner with the means of doing good; as in the case of Philemon in earlier times, and of Howard, Thornton, Wilberforce, and a host of others at subsequent periods. So far from excluding money from religious uses, the Lord has, in all ages, made provision for its being brought into service in his cause, and demanded its contribution. Moreover he has asserted

his absolute ownership to all the wealth found among men—'the silver, and the gold are the Lord's,—and has predicted its free, and abundant use in bringing in the latter day glory.

The objection then, to which we allude, is surely without foundation. Its futility may be further seen, by reflecting upon the effects, which would be produced, by fully acting it out. Virtually to banish money from the service of God, we must, of necessity, relapse into such forms of worship, as suit only the savage state; for the houses, in which we congregate, do not grow up by miracle above our heads. It is money which fells the timber, and rewards the artisan, and supplies the edifice for public accommodation. The ministers, who preach to you, consume money, directly and indirectly, in doing so.—Time is money; and the time which they spend in preparatory studies, and in going to, and from the places of meeting, and the expense of their means of transportation are so much money. Indeed, no man *can* preach the gospel, in such manner as he ought without cost, whether it be borne by himself or others. Against such a degree of the use of money in the service of God, no one perhaps, will object; but *if it be right to use it in any measure, it is of course, right to use it in that measure, in which it will accomplish the largest amount of good.*

IV. We proceed to show, that missionary efforts are pre-eminently entitled to a place among those good works referred to in our text.

In determining the comparative worth of different acts of beneficence, our judgments are based upon three considerations: 1st, the disposition of the benefactor; 2nd, the nature of the good bestowed; and 3rd, the circumstances of need in the case of the beneficiary. It is *the disposition* of the benefactor, which, in certain circumstances, renders a kind tone, or a sympathizing look dearer and more welcome to the heart, than a rich, but heartless donation. A benefit, *to be enjoyed for a day*, may be great: it must be greater if the enjoyment be protracted through *a year*, and greater still if it be conferred for one's *life-time.* A gift bestowed on one individual, surrounded with every earthly source of satisfaction, is valued only as an expression of the disposition of the donor; while the same gift bestowed upon another, is a thousand-fold more valuable; because, in addition to the expression of the kind intention of the giver, it proves a substantial benefit to the receiver—a means, it may be, of acquiring health, of liberation from debt, of relief from anxiety: in other words, it is *a supply ministered to necessity.*

Tested by this rule, all the qualities of a beneficent act are found, in

their highest degree, in God's 'unspeakable gift.' The disposition which originated it, was benevolence in its greatest perfection:—the substance of the benefit was infinite evil averted, and infinite good bestowed:—and the circumstances of the recipients, circumstances of absolute, and utmost need.

To this display of the beneficence of God the nearest resemblance on earth, is found in the labors, which are directed at the salvation of the heathen: for 1. let me ask, whence does *the desire to give them the gospel* spring, but from the operation of the Holy Ghost, *shedding abroad the love of God in the heart*, and by the influence of this new affection, subduing the power of selfishness, and begetting the disposition of voluntary self-sacrifice for the good of others? I appeal to those Christians, who have been misled by their teachers into opposition to missions, and I ask then, if, when their hearts first felt the love of Jesus, they did not glow with intense desire, that all the ends of the earth might see the salvation of God? Did they not, *then* at least, echo back the prayer of David, 'Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee?" Think, my brethren, how you have felt, when your souls were filled with the largest measures of the influences of the Holy Spirit: 'remember whence ye have fallen, be zealous, and repent.'

2. But *what is the good* accomplished by christian missions? To answer this question, by merely relating what has already been done, is more than we can now attempt. Instead, therefore, of going into a detail of all the glorious effects of missionary labour;—instead of pointing you to the peaceful habits of civilized life, substituted in the place of savage wanderings and lawlessness;—instead of directing your view to the extinguished funeral piles, on which, until the influence of missionaries prevented it, twenty thousand widows were annually burnt to death; instead of looking at the schools, in which thousands of children, of both sexes, have learned to read in countries, where during the long reign of paganism, not a single girl had ever learned a letter;—instead of counting the languages into which the word of God has been translated, or numbering the bibles, which, like streams of salvation, are flowing among nations pining with spiritual thirst;—instead of enumerating the churches, which have been established, with the hundreds of converted heathen gathered into them, and maintaining, with admirable fidelity, the discipline of the gospel;—instead of going, in imagination, to the spot, where the once benighted idolator is standing up as a witness for the living God,' and is telling his countrymen of the love of Jesus; or where he is lifting up his voice in

fervent supplication, in the name of our common Mediator, before our common God and Father, for blessings on those, who sent him the gospel; or where he is burying in the baptismal water, his tawney brethren yielding themselves to him who died for their sins and rose for their justification; instead of thus 'walking about Zion, and telling her towers,' beneath those skies, which have been wont to look down only on the spires of gilded pagodas, and idol temples;—instead of this general survey, we feel that, we shall have told enough for christian missions, to tell even a small item of the results they have accomplished.

Take, then, a single instance, in which the grace of God, giving efficacy to missionary labors, has triumphed in the conversion of a heathen soul; and I ask, who can compute the value of the benefit, which has thus been done? We sometimes hear complaints, that so much has been expended in support of missions; but limiting, as we now do, our view of their success to the conversion of one solitary heathen, we ask again, who is willing to compare all that has ever been expended with this one result? Apply the golden rule, and put yourselves, my brethren, each one in the place of this converted heathen,—put your soul in his soul's stead, and ask yourselves, what would compensate you for your surrender, were such a thing possible, of your hope in Christ? Losing the joy of forgiveness, and resuming the load of unpardoned guilt; making the doleful exchange of the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, for the unmitigated anguish of a broken spirit; giving up the blessed hope of the gospel for the dismal forebodings of a guilty mind; in fine, making the actual transition from every thing desirable in the condition of a christian, into the horrible condition of a poor, forlorn, bedarkened, ruined heathen—O what could compensate you for your loss? And if a professor of the religion of Christ should sit down to calculate any expenditure of *money*, and estimate the sum, thus ascertained, as out-weighing the value of your loss—if, under such circumstances, you thought of him, who died that he might redeem, and who asked the question, 'What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'—how could you but exclaim, 'How dwelleth the love of Christ in him.'

My brethren, to learn the worth of the benefit we are now considering, let us place ourselves beside the death-bed of some dying Burman convert. You see his sunken eye, but you see it brightened with the glorious hope of eternal life. He is expiring in the faith of Jesus.—You hear his exulting confidence in a reconciled God, and a precious

Saviour. Death has lost its sting; and the grave its terror. And now, suppose it should be left to the choice of one of you, to gain for himself all that has ever been expended in missionary undertakings, and plunge this dying man back into the darkness of a heathen's death; or to forego this large possession, and leave him to the enjoyment of his triumph over the last enemy: and who could hesitate how to decide? If any man could, we say to him—lay down the christian name: away with such pretensions of discipleship to him, who *gave himself* for us.

3. Need we remark upon *the circumstances of necessity* in the case of the heathen? Their need is extreme. Upon this subject an erroneous opinion is entertained by some, who believe that the heathen will be saved. But on what is this opinion founded? *Can we hope for their salvation because of the smallness of their guilt?* Their guilt, of course, does not consist in the violation of the eternal commands of the decalogue, or in a rejection of the gospel. Yet an inspired writer charges them with heinous guilt. He teaches us, that God has impressed on the face of creation evidences of his eternal power and Godhead, which address themselves to the senses of mankind, and which must be apprehended by every mind that does not 'hold the truth in unrighteousness,' (or hinder the truth by unrighteousness.'*) Possessing these means of knowing God, the heathen have not glorified him as God, but have plunged into abominable idolatries. The apostle asserts that 'they are *without excuse.*' He draws a most appalling picture of human depravity, as a picture of the heathen,—a likeness so true to the original, that missionaries have been charged by them with having written the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans after going among them. The same authority plainly declares, that all are 'under sin,' 'that every mouth must be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God,' and that 'as many, as have sinned without law' (the revealed law) 'shall *perish* without law.'—*Can we hope for their salvation because it may be in the purpose of God to save them?* We know nothing of the purposes of God, but what is revealed in the scriptures; and of his gracious purpose in saving men we have no reason for a conjecture, that it will be accomplished independently of those means which have been divinely appointed, for this very end: 'it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' Where there is no vision the people perish. *Can we hope that the gospel will be conveyed to them by any*

*Professor Stuart's translation. See his Commentary on Romans.

other medium than the instrumentality of Christians? Undoubtedly not. Angels are not employed in publishing the glad tidings of salvation. When one of them was sent to Cornelius, in answer to his prayer for Divine instruction, he was sent, not to communicate gospel truth, but to direct him to Peter as a preacher of the gospel, through whom that communication might be made. Thus early, and thus plainly did God indicate by his providence what is abundantly clear in his word, viz. that for the dispensation of revealed truth the treasure is committed to earthen vessels. The gospel then will never reach the heathen if it be not carried by those who have it. On men devolves this work—a work, the importance, the necessity of which, although confided to human hands, may be learned from the fact, that it was enjoined in the last command of the Saviour, and dignified by the promise of his personal presence, in all places, and throughout all time.

In conclusion: Permit me, my brethren, to ask, 'If the views now presented be correct, what should be our conduct? Does it not become us, each one for himself, fairly and honestly to meet the question—whether it is his duty to go to the heathen? An increase of vital piety, would, beyond all doubt, greatly swell the number of missionaries. If we decide in the light of God's word, and providence, that it is *not* our duty to go, ought we not to furnish to those who are willing to go, the means of going, even if it should be necessary in doing so, to make the most costly sacrifices of temporal comforts and advantages? Suppose, that some desolating disease had visited the metropolis of our State; and that the inhabitants, ignorant of any means of prevention or cure, were dying daily, by hundreds; and suppose that, by some singular favor, you had obtained a knowledge of some simple but effectual remedy, in the reach of all: what would justify you in locking up the secret in your own bosom?—Would the indulgence of your love of ease,—or your desire of gain? Surely, no such causes would be permitted to operate; and any amount of toil and expenditure you would gladly encounter, to convey the knowledge you possessed to the pitiable sufferers. But what is an afflicted city to an afflicted world? What are the ravages of disease to the ravages of sin? What is the death of the body to the death of the soul?

Take another case. Suppose, that by some awful visitation of God, every minister of the gospel, within the limits of South Carolina, should this very day be cut off, the same calamity having already befallen every other section of our land; and suppose, this congregation were in-

formed, that beyond the Atlantic fifteen ministers of the gospel, actuated by the love of Jesus, and of the souls of men, were willing, if we would but bear their expenses, to leave their native land, their friends, their homes, and coming to our stricken and benighted state, to spend their days in laboring for the good of ourselves and our children.—What, under such circumstances, would you do to secure their coming? Whatever that might be, it is more imperiously demanded by the wants of the heathen: for if every bible were obliterated throughout our whole land, and every minister dead, yet the condition of the people would be exalted to heaven in point of privilege, in comparison with that of idolatrous nations. The knowledge of divine truth retained in the memories of many would be an infinite advantage. And yet strange to say, at this very time, fifteen servants of Christ, who have given themselves to him and to the great work of imparting the knowledge of his salvation to the dying heathen, are waiting to go, anxious to go—but they *cannot* go, because the Baptists of America withhold the means!

Christian brethren, how long shall these things be? O, let us learn to do for the heathen, what, with proper views, we should desire, our circumstances being reversed, to be done for ourselves. Let us imitate more closely the example of Him, who gave himself for us —who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Compassionate Redeemer! Mould thy people into thine own image. Inspire them with thy tender pity for the lost and guilty. Enable them to fulfil the purposes of their redemption. O make them a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Amen.